

Strengthening Cooperating Agency Relationships:
Summary of Proposed Changes to the BLM's Planning Regulations

<i>43CFR</i>	<i>Summary of Proposed Change</i>
1601.0-5: Definitions	Provides definitions of cooperating agency (CA) and cooperating agency status, referencing existing NEPA regulations.
1610.3-1: Coordination of planning efforts	Instructs State Directors and Field Managers to utilize CAs to coordinate BLM plans with other federal agency, state and local government, or tribal plans. Instructs State Directors and Field Managers to invite qualified federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes to participate as CAs to help develop RMPs “unless local circumstances make such requests inadvisable.” If a Field Manager denies a request for CA status, the State Director must be informed.
1610.4-1: Identification of issues	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs to analyze input from the scoping process.
1610.4-2: Development of planning criteria	Requires BLM to coordinate with CAs to develop planning criteria.
Sec. 1610.4-3: Inventory data & information collection.	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs to arrange for the collection of inventory data and information.
Sec. 1610.4-4: Analysis of the management situation.	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs to analyze data and information to determine the ability of the resource area to respond to identified issues and opportunities.
Sec. 1610.4-5: Formulation of alternatives.	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs to formulate alternatives.
Sec. 1610.4-6: Estimation of effects of alternatives.	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs to analyze and display the effects of implementing each alternative.
Sec. 1610.4-7: Selection of preferred alternative.	Field Managers will collaborate with CAs in evaluating the alternatives and developing a preferred alternative, but emphasizes that “the decision to designate a preferred alternative remains the exclusive responsibility of the BLM.” (We are also changing the title of the section to be consistent with CEQ regulations that address the <i>identification</i> of a preferred alternative, not the <i>selection</i> of the preferred alternative.)

Note: The proposed language includes non-substantive changes not summarized here.